



Vail Studio - photo by Walters



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Mary Alice Dear's Brown Camas High School Album c 1950-51

Page 47

Reflections

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Page 47. From yet another album belonging to my mother, Mary Alice Dear, dating from her high school years. This photo shows the Camas High School Band, likely performing in the Garfield Auditorium—though I can't say for sure. It looks like there's a stage set in the background, possibly left over from a play, or maybe a play was about to take place.

What really caught my attention—and the reason I chose this photo—is the note at the bottom: "*Vail Studio – Photo by Walters.*" This illustrates the working relationship between Charles Wallace Vail and Robert Walters. Walters was clearly taking pictures for Vail Studio at this point, showing that the two were collaborating. (Charles Wallace Vail was my mother's first cousin once removed—Tim's cousin.)

What's especially interesting is that Charles Wallace Vail has recently been gaining recognition as a regional photographer. Some of his work has been added to the University of Washington archives, and others appear in the Oregon Historical Society Museum collection—though they're not identified correctly. I need to contact them to make that correction. Those particular photographs are of the Vanport Flood, and while they're attributed to Vail, I suspect it may actually have been Robert Walters who was up in the plane taking them.

What's frustrating is that Vail Studio and Robert Walters were major contributors to the *Camas Post-Record*—but their archives are gone. Only scattered newspaper clippings remain. There's really a book waiting to be written about these early Camas photographers. That's not something I plan to take on, but as it turns out, I do have a substantial collection of their work, and this image is just one example.

And yes—this is a new album, page 47. Hard to believe, but there are at least a hundred more photos in this album—maybe more